DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 791 JC 810 088

AUTHOR Schulman, Sandra
TITLE Selling Your Program: Marketing Strategies for a Tutorial or Learning Assistance Program.
PUB DATE Nov 80
NOTE 3p.; Paper presented at the Conference of the California Community College Tutorial Association (San Francisco, CA, November 1980)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adoption (Ideas); Change Strategies; Community Colleges; *Program Implementation; Publicity; Recordkeeping; Teacher Attitudes; *Tutorial Programs; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Several strategies can be used in gaining campus-wide acceptance of new tutorial programs or other support services. First, publicize the service at least one semester in advance through marquee signs, fliers, and participation in appropriate campus events and activities. Second, make instructional staff aware of the fact that the tutorial program exists to meet their needs. Third, avoid resentment on the part of colleagues by keeping a low profile and letting improved student achievement speak for itself. Fourth, do not expect aid from administrators or instructors in carrying out the planning, operations, and evaluation tasks required of program management. Fifth, accept criticism, backbiting, and a lack of appreciation for accomplishments as part of the everyday routine. Sixth, be willing to share program methods and innovations with the college community. Seventh, practice patience in convincing authorities of the need for additional services. Eighth, maintain rigid documentation, including records of the number of students served and the percentage whose grades improve. Ninth, try to document positive feedback from students or others in writing. And finally, accentuate the positive and avoid non-productive griping. The success of the tutorial program will help the college realize the overall goal of offering realistic support to students seeking skill and intellectual development. (JP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED197791

SELLING YOUR PROGRAM: MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR A TUTORIAL OR LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sandra Schulman, Director
Study Skills Center
Los Angeles Pierce College

Presentation at: Conference of the California Community College Tutorial Association
(San Francisco, CA, November 1980)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sandra Schulman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JC 810 088

In this presentation I will share strategies to gain campus-wide acceptance, involvement and general aprobation, without which a supportive service such as a tutorial program, cannot function effectively.

Strategy 1: Plan Ahead. Know what the selling points of your program are about one semester in advance. Be prepared with materials. Get flyers run off; be creative about attention-getting devices. Use bulletins, flyers, brochures, marquee signs that say things like "Don't Drop That Class, Get a Tutor." Be organized. Have a flyer and some referral slips in each instructor's box the first week of school. Have a yearly reminder calendar which tells you what to do each week of the semester, i.e., what you do first week, second week, finals week, etc. ANTICIPATE. Find out what is going on. When are college open houses? Get yourself on all appropriate committees. Be sure you're included in all appropriate events. Look over lists of grants and proposals, so you can get your "dibs" in ahead of time. Is your president going to give a welcome or introductory speech to the faculty or community? Make sure mention of your program is included. If you are planning special workshops, have the announcement flyers ready to go. Have signs up at registration. Have flyers out at registration and on counters. Meet with counselors to be sure your programs and services are included in all orientation programs and registration packets given to new students.

Strategy 2: How Can I Help You? Be a non-threat to your colleagues. Always make it clear that you are meeting their needs. Go to department heads, EOPS coordinators, Voc. Ed. deans, Women's Resource Center directors, counselors, etc. with a humble demeanor and say, "How can I help you?" "How can I help you prevent attrition in your classes; how can I help you keep your students from failing, dropping, becoming discouraged, from falling to pieces....." Say "What are your needs? What do you want us to do for you?" You know they need you! After a while, they'll come to you and say, "We need.....we need more tutors in math,

physics, English." "Can you send me a student tutor to work in our math lab, in our English class, in Computer Science lab?" "Can you help us by writing a grant?" "We have some VEA money, EOPS money." "We need ESL workshops. We're being inundated with foreign students and haven't enough instructors or English courses to fill the demand; can you help by setting up workshops?" "Do a readability on our next text." Remember, however, that your support comes from your colleagues and be careful about letting the administration force feed your program to the faculty. They will resent you and your program..... which leads to.....

Strategy 3: Keep a Low Profile. Your program should be high profile; you should be low profile. Nobody likes a show-off. Nobody likes a monarch. Don't appear to be building an empire. You are there to serve and supplement the instructional program of your school. Remember that. So keep your services up and your own ego down. Be inconspicuous. Don't be a star. The instructional staff are the surgeons. The students are the patients. You bring the bedpans. You'd be surprised how much power you'll gain by starting out low key. The time to blow your horn will come at the end of the school year, when you have proved to them that you've saved souls. Be patient, self-effacing, humble and compassionate. It pays off. Call them by their titles; let them call you by your first name.

Strategy 4: You Give Us the Tools, We'll Do The Job! Be prepared to do the leg work, the dirty work. All you'll get is the funding sources, if you're lucky; the facility, if you're lucky; a few good staff people, if you're lucky. Be ready to write the grants, keep the records, gather the data, train the tutors, recruit the students, lift that barge, and tote that bale! I have had to do the following in order to get my program off the ground: publicity, grant writing, tutor training, funding, attend meetings (unending and numberless), work out strategies, methods for logging, accountability, evaluation, prepare workshops for foreign students, write up curriculum for new courses which benefitted other departments, invent new positions, ad infinitum. But if you want your program to fly, be ready to do it all yourself; don't wait for instructors or administrators

to lift a finger. Do not be afraid to roll up your sleeves and work because.....

Strategy 5: We Never Promised You a Rose Garden. People will not appreciate your efforts. They will backbite you. They'll complain about and criticize your program when things go badly. They'll take all the credit when you succeed. Expect it. Example: A program director recruited many Indo-Chinese, Vietnamese students into our school. They all enrolled in classes they couldn't handle because of their English. They were about to drop or fail. Our center set up workshops, tutorial sessions, created innovative materials, did a lot of work. In the director's report, he gave his staff all the credit for maintaining the status of the students in class and never mentioned the study skills program once. Don't mind if you end up being the dumping ground for all the flotsam and jetsam on campus, for all the students who are not functioning as they should in classes, in life.....for one reason or another. Remember, your function is to meet the needs of the academically deficient student. Expect to be "dumped on" in every sense of the term. If you and your service are there when you are needed, they'll learn to love you for it.

Strategy 6: Your Life's an Open Book. We once had a counselor who considered everything a military secret, hid funding sources, locked up records, never shared data, considered a request for information about a learning disabled student an intrusion, as though we were going to use the information to demean the student instead of to help assess his problem and prescribe the course of action accordingly! The strategies we use in our center's many programs we share with anyone who'll listen. We share ideas, methods, innovations. "I pick your brains, you pick mine!" Remember it never detracts from you if you share your successful ideas. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Don't be secretive about anything you do. It makes you suspect. Don't do anything which might be construed as improper or questionable. Keep an open door and a spotless reputation. Conduct open houses, tours of your center, invite visits of administrators, department heads, other learning center directors or whatever your equivalent on other campuses might be colleagues of all sorts to observe your program. If anyone asks for help or advice, give it. When you need them, they'll reciprocate. In-

struct your staff to freely explain the program and to behave discreetly, and always be above reproach. If your program has weaknesses, admit them. Seek help and try honestly to improve. Ask for help and offer help. But always remember.....

Strategy 7: Soft Sell with a Punch. This is better known as patience and persistance. The first semester of our program's existance we began with a trickle of students who came through our center. The second semester, we expanded not only the number of students served, but the kinds of services we offered. It has since turned from a trickle to a raging torrent of students. Now we are handling 3000 students a year on both regular and short term bases. It took seven years for me to convince the English and counseling departments to add a reading comprehension section to the English placement test. This past semester during pre- and regular registration we tested 1800 students for reading competency. We made up a recommendation form indicating which courses we recommend based on the reading score obtained by the student on the test. Amazingly, the students are taking the recommended classes and have not, as predicted by the Counseling department, been reluctant about being tested. Persistance..... we have for a number of semesters put referral slips in instructors' boxes at the beginning of each semester. This semester we have gotten referrals from instructors who ignored our services last year. Why? Because the academic levels of their students are going down and they have finally acknowledged the need for our service. We persisted in our request for a lower level non-transferrable ESL class because the existing English courses for foreign students were on too high a level for some of our foreign-speaking students. This past semester, the English department finally added a non-transferrable class for limited English speaking students to their course offerings. Our developmental communications department, with which I work very closely, introduced a reading course especially designed for foreign speaking students, with the blessings of the English department. We pressured and pressured for all this until they finally heard us. This semester, my patience is being tested in trying to convince the counseling department that severely learning disabled and educationally handicapped students deserve the services of a specialist as much as the hearing impaired or physically handicapped students deserve

the special instructors and programs which they have. But I don't give up, so we are documenting, and perse v ering and eventually they will come through and use some of their special services funding to set up a program to help my center meet the needs of ever increasing numbers of students in that very special category.

Strategy 8: Run a Tight Ship. Document, document, document; log, log, log; copy. copy, copy; write up reports, track progress, make a million copies of everything. Have a contract for each student. Develop some convenient form. Remember, it doesn't pay to be sloppy. Have a log for sign in, a log for head count, contracts for tutees. Pre-test, post-test, count attendance. It pays. Have data and statistics at your finger tips such as numbers of parent of students who test below norms in reading, or who qualify for English placement, numbers whom you served, percent whose grades went up, etc. Do not tutor without supervision. Ask for referral slips from instructors for tutors and tutees. Do follow up. Have rules for the numbers of no-shows permitted. Have your files in order. Send a yearly report to your dean. Make copies of your data available to anyone involved in any way with your program. This kind of thing is the best selling point for your program.

Strategy 9: Keep Those Cards and Letters Coming, Folks! Don't ever forget, you need all the friends you can get. Have a brag file and don't be modest about it. Any positive feedback that you receive from someone who appreciates or has benefitted from your services, accept graciously and try to get it documented. If a student mentions that the tutoring program helped him or her, suggest quietly that he write a note to the dean or to you, and you send a copy to the dean. A department chairperson, or an instructor praises your services. Get it down in writing. A student's test scores go from F to C. Have section on his contract or in his file to document this. Develop evaluation or follow-up forms. Praise is great PR. And of course, you don't have to be told about newspaper articles, both in the community and on campus.

Strategy 10: Accentuate the Positive. While it is often true that a squeaky wheel gets oiled, it is conversely true that no one likes a complainer. Don't gripe! In's non-productive. There is a difference between being aggressive and assertive about

getting the things you need and being negative and a constant nuisance. I have treaded that fine line, myself, often, and am not without guilt in that area. Don't be afraid to stroke. Stroke your staff, your administrators, your colleagues, your student workers just as much as you stroke your students (which I know you do). Positive reinforcement is a pedagogical theory known to us all. It works in marketing too. Write lots of letters of praise, letters to a dept. chairperson who has supported your program, to a dean or other administrators who helped obtain funding for your program. (Administrators, like dirty old men, need love too!) I wrote a pleasant note to our college president the other day after a meeting in which he was particularly supportive of my program. He was surprised at receiving a letter that wasn't a complaint, but there was no doubt that he was pleased. You know the cliche about "more flies with honey" and all that. Thank your staff, remember birthdays, and without being too obviou. and obnoxious about it, keep on everyone's good side. Be an optimist. Praise, praise, praise; appreciation is contagious. If your colleagues see that you recognize merit, then they'll reciprocate. Last but not least, keep your sense of humor.

I hope that some of these strategies prove helpful to you in your overall goal which is to offer realistic support to the ever-increasing numbers of students looking to the community college as a place for developing skills and for growing intellectually!

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
96 Powell Library Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

MAR 6 1981